

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes**

**March 25, 2013**

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee Room, Town Hall was held on Monday, March 25, 2013 at 7:30 p.m., Room #112 with the following members present: L. Pitman, J. Burke, J. Denneen, M. Kent, D. DiCenso, M. Iwanowicz, D. Crowley, S. Ahmed, J. McDermott, J. Lowre, S. Lawson, P Hinton, C. Lane, Absent was D. Bruce and T. Williams. Also in attendance was Town Administrator M. Boynton, Town Accountant J. Cuneo and Fire Chief T. Bailey.

7:30 p.m. – Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Chairmen L. Pitman.

### **May 6, 2013 Spring Annual Town Meeting**

Planning Board Budget- Present for the discussion was Planning Board Members E. Forsberg. Chairman J. Murtagh, and R. Nottebart

Finance Committee had questions on the \$15,000 in the Planning Board Budget for a consultant and whether to keep this in for the FY14 Budget as the money hasn't been used this year.

Planning Board Member J. Conroy's e-mail dated March 25, 2013 was read into the record in support of keeping the \$15,000 for a consultant. He feels that there is a need if the Board is faced with a complex application down the road with no source of funding available for a consultant if the application could not be handled by the Town's Engineering Department.

E. Forsberg spoke to the \$15,000 not being used since the Town Planner left. Board has missed the planner and the expertise available to them, they have been relying on the Secretary and Town Engineer. They have had difficulty with drafting written decisions with regular and special conditions, and have relied on the applicant's attorney to write them. They are not comfortable in doing this, but do trust these attorneys. Another issue is lack off office hours for applicants to come in and a ask questions and go over applications to make sure they are done properly. They have discussed this with Town Administrator and feel the best solution is to share a planner with another Town or hire a part time part time planner. Up to this point, they haven't had any large projects to deal with. Secretary works 34 hours a week and sets up meetings, clocks in information, records meetings, but is unable to answer a lot of questions, they need an expert. There have been 13 applications since the beginning of the fiscal year and some have been continued.

J. Murtagh feels that a consultant doesn't work, they need a part time planner to guide them with the preparation for a meeting, and prevent mistakes from happening.

R. Nottebart – Board has only \$15,000 for the consultant to guide them. They have been asking for assistance from Town Counsel and this costs money. He feels they need a part time planner or an arrangement of combining the position with Economic Development Department to change the reporting structure of the office now. Board needs to be out front on the marijuana zone. He would like to see the FinCom fund this amount and, in the future, a part time planner position. They are an elected Board and he is comfortable with working with Town Administration on the restructuring of the department.

Committee had questions on whether it would be possible to share a planner position with another Town, Town Administrator doesn't know of anyone interested in doing this at this time, but he could look into it.

Town Administrator spoke to a proposal that an individual would oversee the permitting office by combining Conservation, Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals, and not have the position of planner, but provide technical funding for a consultant as needed, have a line item for someone to do plan review and provide technical services under the direction of the Economic Development Officer. Organizational structure of these departments need to be resolved. \$15,000 is seed money if needed. There is no money in the salary portion of the budget for a planner and he won't recommend putting money in it till the organizational structure is resolved. He needs to sit down with the Planning Board on this issue and unable to do it prior to the Spring Town Meeting, He will address the issue at the Fall Town Meeting after the Town has received the State numbers. Feels this can work with a compromise from the departments.

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Planning Board Budget in the amount of \$69,904, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) (Unanimous)

**School Budget** – Present were School Committee Chairman, N. Gallivan, Superintendent of Schools L. Lynch, Assistant Superintendent J. Kenney and M. Friscia, Business Manager and W. O'Malley, Teacher/Intern.

N. Gallivan provided the Committee with an overview of their FY13 and FY14 budget. They have had a tremendous improvement in programs and class sizes, middle schools have had great improvements in math and research skills. Professional development has done the transition from MCAT testing to PARK testing, coordinating on a national level with all done on line. They have instituted math testing this year, and now the children three times a year to see if there is progress. They have had good results in the K-5 reading program, will be looking into mathematics program next. They will begin negotiating the union contracts shortly. Teacher's contract is up August 31. They have

reorganized the cafeteria program, and negotiated the worker's contract, thus eliminating managers in each building. Program was becoming a financial drain on the system. They were able to purchase equipment for the satellite locations with savings. They are continuing to watch the demographics; there has been an overall increase in enrollment this year of 50 students. Apartments contribute to this and they are unsure whether or not this is a trend.

Committee questioned the issue of non-speaking parents that don't speak English. The School Department uses foreign language teachers or volunteer parents. They have to be careful with the confidentiality issue. All students are required to pass the MCATS. Teachers have to pass the same courses.

PARK Testing – 26 states have adopted this, 24-31 states in Smarter Balance. This testing will be difficult in states that don't have funding. Massachusetts does receive funding. Funding goes to States that have more aggressive programs. The School Department does receive Grant funding in order to gain efficiency in math and sciences. Town does receive Grant funding in order to gain efficiency in math and sciences. Requested budget is 37,819,947, \$244,000 above what Town Administrator has available.

Committee had questions on full time kindergarten. It was explained that there is a Grant available, but Town would have to have a graduated fee schedule if you took the Grant. After three years, it would be required to assume the total cost. 73% of kindergarten students take advantage of full day. They have payment plans available for parents with financial problems. They notice the difference in students especially in math with full day vs half day. Assistant Superintendent J. Kenney continues to look at this, there are many factors.

School Department has four areas of revenue: Appropriations, Grants, Expense Reimbursements, and Offsets (Fees & Tuitions). Level services means no additional staff or no new programs. Only increase is in collecting bargaining agreement, and possibly special ed increases and the need for additional school busses. They provide their budget to the Town Administrator in January and he provides them with a number based on predictions. A number is built on needs and adjusted throughout the Spring. Attrition could drive the number down.

N. Gallivan spoke to hoping they don't have to use the \$600,000 of the money from the Override, but feel it is there, if necessary. They are not requesting that the Town Administrator adjust his number, but are requesting 2/3 of any new revenue that might become available.

Superintendent spoke to the Food Services Budget, should break even this year and cover their deficit from last year and should provide an offset for next year's budget.

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School Committee will meet with the Finance Committee on Thursday, April 4, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. for further discussion on the School Budget.

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m., Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril  
Clerk